



# **John Reich Journal**

Volume 14 / Issue 2/3

October 2002

# JRCS

JOHN REICH COLLECTORS SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 135 Harrison, OH 45030

The purpose of the John Reich Collectors Society (JRCS) is to encourage the study of numismatics, particularly United States gold and silver coins minted before the introduction of the Seated Liberty design, and to provide technical and educational information concerning such coins.

Annual dues .....\$15.00

Life Membership .....\$375.00

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The John Reich Journal is the official publication of the Society and is distributed to all members in good standing. Members are encouraged to submit any articles encouraging the study of numismatics and / or relating to early United States gold and silver coins to the editors. Especially needed are articles containing new information about die marriages, die states of published die marriages, attribution methods, collections, collectors, etc.

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Cover Photos:	Proof 1832 Overton-123 Half Dollar. Photographed with edge mirror. Proof only die marriage. Five known examples, two of which are impaired. Proofs. Ex. Allenburger 3/23/48:880 and Bareford 10/22/81:386.
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# John Reich Journal

Official publication of the  
John Reich Collectors Society

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Whole No. 43

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## Editors' Comments

You finally have the latest copy of the journal in your hands. We would like to apologize for the delay in getting back on schedule with this double issue of the journal. As most of you know the society, and numismatics in general, was dealt a crippling blow when Russ Logan passed away on March 19, 2002. The news devastated me both personally and professionally. Russ was responsible for my becoming the editor of the journal. He improved me as a numismatist by continually challenging me to look further into the subject I was researching. "Logan Logic" was used to see the problem from a different perspective. His insightful suggestions often opened a whole new avenue of thought, even when one believed they had reached the end of their research. Any major research project involving the Federal Coinage of the United States included Russ. The John Reich Collectors Society was greatly enriched from his contributions.

His absence was deeply felt at the New York ANA convention. It was here, at the JRCS open houses, that we had the opportunity to access Russ's thoughts on our favorite projects. His advice and guidance was indispensable to the outcome of our research and articles. He always had something interesting to share with us, either through his coins or his most recent "invention". I am reminded of the ANA where Russ came to the open house and placed his briefcase on the table and carried on routine conversations with us. After some time had passed a member asked what was in the case. Russ proceeded to show us his most recent "Logan Engineered" invention. He had constructed a "Castaing Machine" in aluminum using pre-inked pads as the bar dies and sections of tubing with stickers on the rim to represent the planchets. He demonstrated the way that edge lettering errors occurred on the halves. Russ always had a particular interest in the "third side" of his coins. We ended up playing with his creation for the rest of the evening making all sorts of "errors". The project was considered a success as we all learned from the experience.

Much of our time this year was spent with favorite recollections like this about Russ. One of the favorite stories including Russ was one of the recovery of some half dimes from a sink drain. One of our current officers collects these minuscule pieces of American History. It wouldn't be so bad if he only collected the Bust variety, but his interests carry him through the Liberty Seated type as well. He was inspecting some low grade Seated Half Dimes in the bathroom of the meeting room. Now, as those of you know that have attended an ANA JRCS open house, space is severely limited. People are looking at coins anyplace they can find space and enough light. Often the bathroom is one of the best places to view coins as the light is normally better than it is in the room. Well, upon removing several half dimes from a flip some found their way into the sink, and as they are so small, also into the elbow joint of the plumbing. The total value of this mistake was likely to account to only a few dollars, but as we are collectors (and cheap!) an attempt to retrieve them had to be contemplated. After some

thought Russ climbed under the sink to try and save the half dimes from their fate. He reached out from under the plumbing asking for something to use to obtain some leverage. The member who had dropped the coins into the drain could think of nothing else other than a washcloth. Russ accepted the cloth and soon emerged with the elbow joint of the plumbing rescuing the offending half dimes. The pipe was then replaced and nothing more was thought of the incident until the next morning. The occupants of the room told us of the events of the next morning. One of them went into the bathroom to brush their teeth and soon had cold water lapping at their feet as the pipes were not connected tight enough. They called the desk and maintenance came up to fix the drain. The hotel maintenance man commented that it looked like the drain had been removed. They answered that no one would have any reason to do that, not knowing the whole story until the next day! "Logan Engineering" had saved the half dimes from their apparent fate.

Another brush with "Logan Engineering" and water was recalled from the Denver ANA. During the open house the fire alarm was sounded in the hotel. We were staying on the 15th floor of the hotel. I decided to take my briefcase and coins to the safety of the parking lot. Some of the members decided to remain in the room believing it a false alarm. I wound my way through the stairwell to the outside. Many of the members joined me and we conversed in the safety of the fresh air. The fire company responded and determined that there was no fire and we were told that the elevators would be working in about 15 to 20 minutes. I decided to hoof it back up the 15 flights of steps to the room. At about the 9th floor I started to get tired. A few floors more and I thought I was going to die. I had forgotten about the effect of the altitude on my ability to get oxygen into my system. After finally getting back to the room on the 15th floor, soaked in sweat and out of breath, I was greeted with jeers and laughter at my predicament. After a change of clothes the open house meeting continued. The next morning I was rudely introduced to the latest example of "Logan Logic". I stepped into the bathtub for my morning shower to find it filled with ice cold water. Russ later explained that he had filled the tub in case there was a fire so they could wet towels and stuff them under the door to prevent smoke from entering the room. This was little consolation to someone with cold, wet feet!

There was a game that some of us played with Russ. He was always known as a great trader when you had something of interest to him. I remember one time I had purchased a Capped Bust Half with a lamination. I showed it to Russ and he expressed an interest in it. I gave it to him and was promised something in return. Later that night he came up and shook my hand leaving a marriage in my hand that I needed in my collection. I went after him to inquire how much money I had to add to my coin to obtain the piece he had just handed me. He informed me that he considered the trade even and to forget about any perceived difference. I was extremely happy with my new marriage. This started a game of "tag" that some of us played with Russ. We would hand him something we knew he liked, such as a doubled edge letter half dollar, and

would say "tag, you're it" and walk away. Sometime, often months later at another coin show, Russ would return the favor with his offer in trade. Somehow they would always turn out to be fair.

Years ago, the ANA had their early convention in Cleveland. Russ planned a party at his house for many of the members of the JRCS and other organizations which Russ was a member. It was a wonderful gathering of collectors and researchers. I always enjoyed trying to "get Russ's goat" in some small way. The show was scheduled for a time close to my birthday. One of my buddies gave me a heads up that Russ had planned on having a birthday cake for me at the party. Russ had contacted him to find out what kind of cake I would enjoy. I am very fond of German Chocolate Cake and after arriving at the party Russ's wife, Brenda, told me we were having it for desert. I asked her if there was another choice as I did not like German Chocolate Cake. She looked at me strangely and soon took off looking for Russ. I headed around the opposite corner to witness my work. She cornered Russ in the kitchen and was obviously speaking to him about his misinformation. I then ordered an extra large piece when it was offered letting Russ know that he had been duped.

Russ's thoughtfulness, kindness, knowledge, friendship and guidance will be sorely missed by all of us who knew him. He has left us with a lifetime of memories and stories. The numismatic community has lost a driving force in research. His input will be missed each time we publish a journal. We can only hope to use the tools he provided us to continue our work with the society. He will be missed by all those who he touched, but he will never be forgotten.

There have been some fundamental changes in the running of our society. The final decision was reached at the ANA to appoint W. David Perkins as the new treasurer. The society's funds have been transferred to the new checking account. We are now ready to resume our numismatic activities. We have also decided to appoint a census keeper for each of the series covered by the society. Russ had been the census keeper for all the series in the past and had begun to plan on the sharing of the responsibility. The new census keepers are: Steve Crain for the half dimes, Charles Horning for the dimes, Glenn Peterson for the quarters, Steve Herrman for both types of the half dollars, and W. David Perkins for the dollars. An additional advantage to the division of responsibility is that we are going to have a census in EACH journal. This will turn over the individual censuses twice as fast as before. It will take six issues to complete the run of the censuses compared to the previous twelve. This will provide more timely information to the membership on their favorite series. The bust dime census will appear in the next issue of the journal followed by the quarters and each series in order. Those of you who have not yet submitted their dime census for inclusion can still participate by sending it to me at the PO Box.

The officers have decided to create a new JRCS award. We have established "The Founders Award" in the name of the founding fathers of our organization, David Davis, Russell Logan, Allen Lovejoy, John McCloskey, and Bill Subjack. The award is to be given at the discretion of the officers for meritorious service to the society. The membership can nominate anyone they think deserving of the award for the consideration of the board. This will be the highest honor the society can bestow on the membership. It is not a yearly award, but one given as seen fit by the current officers of the society in the spirit of the hard work and dedication of our founding fathers.

You will find two additional inserts with this issue of the journal. The first is the ballot for voting for the *Jules Reiver Literary Award*. The eligible articles are listed for your consideration. Please vote for no more than three selections and return the ballot to me at the club's PO Box. We look forward to presenting the award to the lucky recipient in recognition of all their hard work in submitting their article for publication. Also included with the award ballot is proposed changes to our bylaws. We need a majority vote to accept the proposed amendments. Please take the time to give us your opinions.

The other insert is from Bowers and Merena Galleries announcing the sale of Russ' collection. It will be sold in conjunction with the Baltimore show in November. The details about the auction is outlined on the flyer. It also gives you the opportunity to receive a FREE catalog for the sale. This catalog will become an important research tool for the future. Do not miss this opportunity to obtain a complimentary copy for your library.

Additionally, the time has come to request your dues payment for continued membership in the society. Please send a \$15 check made out to JRCS to me at the PO Box to cover the next years membership including volume 15 of **The John Reich Journal**. It is always helpful to include your membership number on your renewal check. You will find your number on the mailing label. If you have any changes to your address, please inform us so we can change our database.

We are also in need of articles for inclusion in issue 15/1 of the journal. Planned publication of the first issue for next year will be the first part of February. If you have any research projects in the works please consider submitting them for publication in the next issue. All articles published are eligible to receive the *Jules Reiver Literary Award*. Send something to us soon, and remember to vote for this years award on the enclosed ballot.

**Send \$15 dues  
to continue your membership to:  
JRCS, PO Box 135, Harrison, OH 45030**

# Plaudits, Pans and Perplexing Points



1837 B2 vs. 1837 B3

Recently I undertook a project designed to help me achieve my goal with the small size bust quarter varieties. Since I only attend large shows to broaden availability, I felt that there had to be a way to speed up the identification time so that nothing would be duplicated or missed. I am trying to find the original 32 Browning varieties in VF or better with that original toned look. I omit the most recently discovered four because of rarity and condition. I require only 11 at this writing with four that are R5 or better.

Until now I have relied mostly on the Durst printing of the Browning book. While working out my system, I have noticed some irregularities in the available information. However, one in particular really jumped out at me and I am hoping that someone can provide some enlightenment.

I compare the variety I am working on with all other varieties that share their respective obverse and reverse, if I have them. While working on the obverses for 1837 B2 and 1837 B3, I noticed several discrepancies. According to available information, these two varieties share the same obverse. However, I am a little skeptical. On my specimen of 1837 B3, there is a dentil that protrudes out further than its counterparts about midway between the 7 in the date and the 13th star. The 7th and 10th stars are repunched. Also the 7 in the date has a raised protrusion just left of the right serif at the top. None of this appears on my specimen of 1837 B2 and it has the 9th star repunched. All of this is visible with 10X magnification and verified with 40X.

Granted it will take more studying of these obverses from other specimens to be positive. I am having these anomalies photographed through a microscope and saved as jpeg images. If anyone has any information they would like to share, please contact me at the following address:

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"Provenance and Protection for Posterity"

Do you recall seeing those words, and in that order, sometime in the past? Many of you reading this will recognize the words of a headline in the **John Reich Journal**, Volume 6, Number 2, April 1992. On pages 10-13 Russell James Logan explained why he was a bear on the subject. While at the same time virtually begging one and all to adopt the habit of attributing the provenance of our acquisitions- every time, no misses.

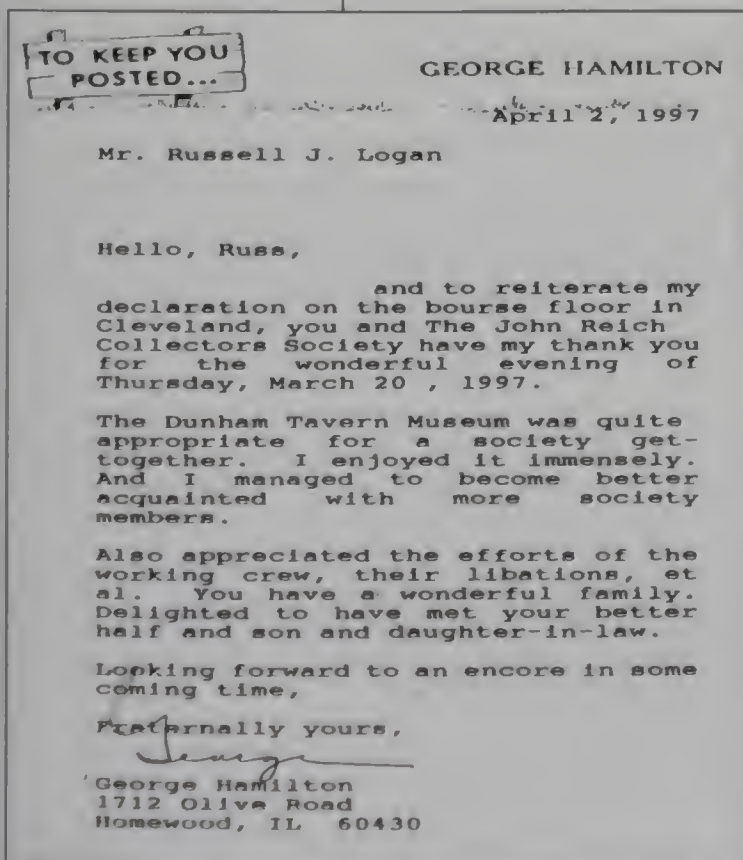
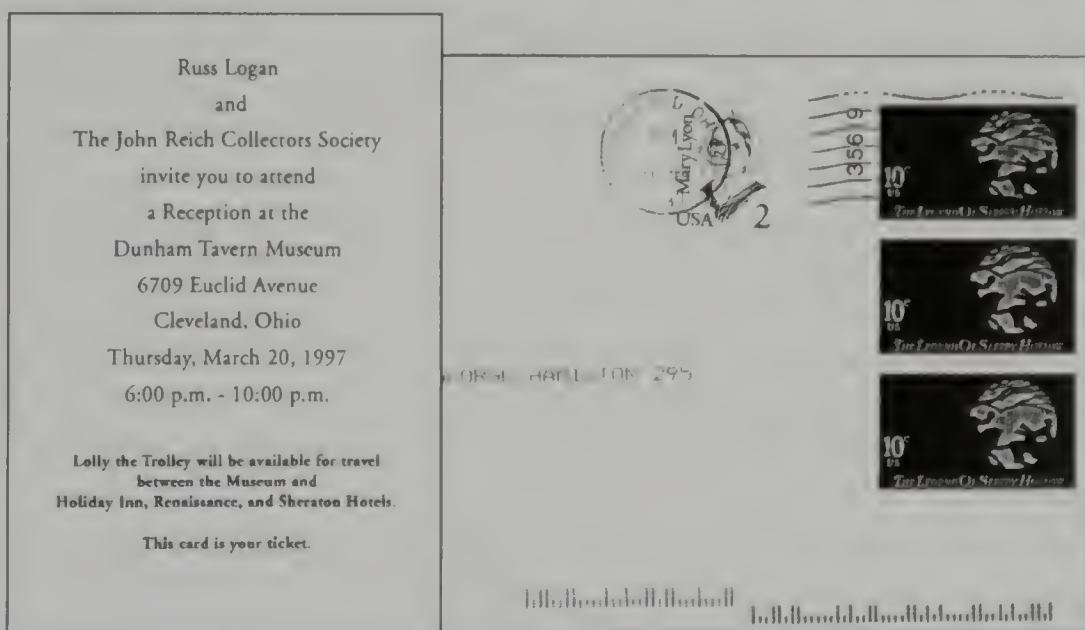
It was this devotion to one of Russ' beliefs that cemented my admiration for him. There will not be many accolades we will be able to add to the reminiscences already uttered and published since losing, on the morning of March 19, "A giant among collectors and students of early Federal coinage," as described by

Sheridan Downey in his sad postscript to the introduction of his recent Mail Bid Sale No. 27.

Brad Karoleff, in his article "Gone, but not forgotten" (CoinWorld, April 15), recorded what most of us would like to be able to cite today. That having been done, maybe a reference to one of Russ' social successes would be appropriate. I will always remember the evening of March 20, 1997, at the time of an ANA Spring get-together in Cleveland. As the accompanying invitation indicated a promise of good fellowship, it was all there. Thank you, Russ. It was an evening to be remembered.

George Hamilton, JRCS 0295

*Illustrated here is the invitation from Russ Logan and The John Reich Collectors Society to a memorable evening in Cleveland during the ANA Spring meeting in 1997. Also shown is the envelope in which the invitation was mailed to me. Note the stamps used by Russ who, in addition to his coin collecting, found time to create a stamp collection.*



*Sincere letter of appreciation for the Logan-JRCS reception. That encore of the memorable reception was not to be.*



### Attribute your coins!

I sell auctions on eBay called "Bucket of Coins." In January 2001 I sold my Bust Dime collection. Several of the pieces of lesser value I saved and tossed into a Valentine's day Bucket of Coins Auction. One of these coins was an 1827 dime that I had bought from a Virginia dealer in the summer of 2000. I paid about \$20 for the coin, it was in VF 25, but had a nasty gash through LIBERTY, so the price was about right.

A couple months ago, one of my regular buyers since then confessed as to the reason with the following story:

Do you happen to remember an 1827 Bust Dime with a gash across LIBERTY? You sold it to us 2 February's ago in you Valentine's Day Coffee can of coins. I listed that dime on eBay last fall, because I'm picky about visual aspects of coins (scratches, marring, etc.), and this one, though really neat and VF, had that ugly gash. Anyway, I was E-mailed the evening of the listing by 2 different members of **The John Reich Collectors Society**. They told me that I had a very rare treasure. At first, I thought they were scamming me, but the bid was \$200 before I could blink. After conversing with a few of them (and being advised to NOT terminate the auction no matter what any individual offered me in cash to do so), I believed they were legit. They told me that I had a "JR10", a very rare die variety of that particular date of bust dime. My coin was either the 9th or 10th piece in existence (I can't remember which), and 1 of the others was in the Smithsonian. They told be that if the coin hadn't been damaged, the bid may have reached \$10K. As it was, it drew a whopping \$4,500. final bid. So now you know that I'm a consistent customer of yours!

Thank you!

Oh, to know the varieties of all the series!

Michael Atkins



### Rust Bucket Remarriages

A new use of an old term was recently floated on the Bust Half Nut Club e-list. Usually referring to a car of northern extraction, "rust bucket" was recently applied to a coin struck from severely rusted dies. From this comes the concept of the rust bucket remarriage. This is not a remarriage in the usual sense: instead it applies to a die marriage that exists in an early state that is struck from rust free dies. This same die marriage also exists in a later state struck from very rusted dies. The two DM's offered as evidence of this concept are 1817 O103 and 1830 O110. Coins thus struck will show heavy pitting or die lines from an attempt to brush the rust from the dies. This detail will be raised on the coin because it was recessed on the die. How is it that these coins came to be?

My guess is that a certain number of 18XX O1XX were struck, coinage was halted, and the dies were returned to the coiner and locked away. After a period of lime elapsed, these same two dies, now quite rusted, were again paired in the press and coinage resumed. This doesn't explain much, however.

Why was coinage stopped? And for how long? Could the dies have been retired for lapping, but merely left in storage? How long would it take for the dies to have rusted so badly? Would the dies have been marked so that they would be the first ones used when coinage resumed? Are there any one sided rust buckets? I'd enjoy hearing some other ideas to explain this.

Brad Higgins

# 1836 B3 Bust Quarter Terminal Die State

**Eric M. Krauss, M.D.**

I recently obtained a specimen of the 1836 B3 quarter, terminal die state, showing obverse die cracks not mentioned in Walter Breen's update of *The Early Quarter Dollars of the United States* by A. W. Browning.

The reference lists five obverse die cracks. These are, in order of appearance,

- (i) through S1-6;
- (ii) transverse across portrait, from right of S7 to left of S13;
- (iii) arc across lower left portion of bust, starting at S1;
- (iv) through numeral 8 into drapery;
- (v) through numeral 3 into drapery.

In the terminal die state, according to Browning/Breen, these cracks "extend to the border and meet in the head."

This specimen, shown in Figure 1, has AU detail and fine old pinscratch graffiti ("JB") in the fields. Two additional die cracks are seen. One extends from the left obverse field over the chin and cheek and meets die crack (ii) in front of the ear (Figure 2). A second extends from the top edge to the top of the cap (Figure 3). Where the cracks intersect at the ear, there are small raised lumps of metal curiously suggesting earrings or beads to the unaided eye.

Die failure below the arc-like crack (iii) results in an obliteration of design detail (Figure 4), and there is a raised area replacing the lower right part of the clasp. The reverse of the coins shows no additional die cracks, but the head of the eagle is very weak, likely because it is positioned just opposite the lower left portion of the obverse bust, where the obverse die collapsed.

I have a specimen of the 1836 B1, terminal die state, in which the obverse die is dramatically shattered and shows multiple split levels, but no new cracks beyond those listed in the Browning/Breen. Regarding the B3, it would be of interest for those possessing late die state examples of this common variety to check for these additional cracks.



**1836 B3 Bust Quarter, terminal die state.**



**1836 B3 Obverse crack field-chin-ear, with raised lumps near ear.**



**1836 B3 Obverse crack rim-cap.**



**1836 B3 Detail of clasp area.**



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# **Auction Summary/Prices Realized for Selected Silver Dollars**

## **HNA Auction Sales - January and February 2002**

**W. David Perkins, NLG**

In November and December 2001, I had the opportunity to catalog a large auction sale consignment of almost 150 early United States silver dollars 1794-1803. The majority of these dollars were in grades of Extra Fine to Mint State. All of the dollars were certified. This consignment was the property of Michael R. Hering, who had been collecting them for approximately the last four years. This was not a die variety collection, and probably should be labeled as a "date and major type collection," with many duplicates of certain types of dollars. These were to be offered over two public auction sales by Heritage Numismatic Auctions (HNA). In addition, various additional consignments of early silver dollars were included in both the January and February HNA sales (which I did not catalog).

I attributed all of the Hering early dollars, both as to die marriage and (Bowers) die state. Having an opportunity to study a large quantity of early dollars at one time was, needless to say, fun. It also gave me a chance to view and study the dollars more closely, something most of us do not have the opportunity to do very often. (I was not able to attend the sale in person).

The early silver dollar session of the January sale opened with Lot 7156, a 1794 Dollar graded NGC EF-40. This was "an above average specimen with a better than average strike" and realized \$86,250, a price midway between CoinWorld Trends prices for EF-40 (\$80,000) and EF-45 (\$90,000).

There were an abundance of 1795 B-1 ("Two Leaves" reverse) and B-5 ("Three Leaves" reverse) Flowing Hair dollars in the two sales, a testimony to the number of surviving specimens of these two die marriages relative to the other Bolender numbers for 1795. Needless to say neither of these die marriages receive a premium for rarity, and thus should be representative of "type price" which is usually set by the most common varieties for the date and type. As there were seventeen 1795 B-5 Dollars in grades VF-20 to AU-58 in these two sales, I picked the B-5 Dollars to compare in the table below.

The January sale had one 1795 B-5 die marriage in VF-35 and five in EF-40, graded by three different grading services. Additionally, three specimens were called EF-45, one AU-50 and one AU-58. The February sale had the balance of the Hering early silver dollars, as well as additional lots. The following table compares the prices realized for 1795 B-5 Dollars in these two sales, with grading service and condition notes:

## AUCTION SUMMARY/PRICES REALIZED FOR SELECTED SILVER

Grade	Service	Condition Comments	Price Realized	Comments/ Detractions
VF 20	ANACS	Minor surface disturbances	\$1,955	Rim disturbances
VF 30	ANACS	Deep toning, lighter reverse	\$2,070	Dark
VF 30	ANACS	Deep medium gray toning	\$2,300	Planchet disturbances
VF 35	ICG	Smooth surfaces, attractive	\$3,105	Obverse rim bump
VF 35	ICG	Medium gray, traces of lustre	\$2,358	Rim disturbances noted
EF 40	ANACS	Original, traces lustre	\$4,888	Attractive for grade
EF 40	ICG	Lightly toned	\$4,025	Die rust noted
EF 40	ANACS	Mottled toning	\$4,140	Adjustment marks on Liberty
EF 40	ANACS	Nice eye appeal	\$4,945	Obverse scratch noted
EF 40	NGC	Struck off-center	\$4,542	Light adjustment marks on reverse
EF 40	PCGS	Light silvery gray	\$5,750	Moderate contact marks
EF 40	ANACS	Light gold toning/lustre	\$5,520	Pleasing example
EF 45	NGC	Nice medium gray	\$6,440	Problem free for grade
EF 45	NGC	Nice toning	\$4,715	Scratches, rim bump
EF 45	ANACS	Attractive, no adjustment marks	\$4,600	No detractions noted
AU 50	PCGS	Nice toning	\$10,063	No detractions noted
AU 58	ANACS	Richly toned	\$14,663	Faint adjustment marks, few nicks

**The prices realized in these two sales appear to track well to current Trends prices.** The obvious lesson is a basic one: *eye appeal and lustre help prices, problems detract*. It is also interesting to note the range of prices for the seven specimens graded EF-40 and the three graded EF-45. Overall, the majority of these dollars could *at best* be called "average," and the prices realized reflected this.

The Eliasberg 1795 B-7, BB-18 Dollar was offered again (at public auction) in this sale. This specimen was originally graded MS-63 in the B&M *Eliasberg Collection* sale in April 1997. It realized \$61,600. Part of the Michael R. Hering collection (and now graded MS-64 NGC), this specimen realized \$59,800 almost five years later, a slight drop from the 1997 price.

Also in the January Heritage *FUN Sale* was the Eliasberg 1798 B-6, BB-96 Dollar, now graded MS-63 NGC. This specimen realized \$27,600, a strong increase from the \$17,600 it realized in the 1997 Eliasberg sale (where it was graded MS-60).

A specimen of the rare and desirable 1797 B-2, BB-72 Dollar was offered in the January *FUN Sale*. It turned out to be the specimen from Stack's January 18, 19, 20, 21, 1984 *The Amon Carter, Jr. Collection* sale:218. It now has a new home in a prominent Midwest collection. This is probably the second finest known example of the Small Letters Reverse Dollar of 1797.

A few of the 1798 Dollars stood out in my mind. The first was the very rare 1798 B-5, BB-93 (R-6). It was a very nice and original EF-40 specimen, correctly graded (in my opinion). It realized \$9,200, a premium of approximately 4-5X Trends price for the date! Another 1798 Dollar that stood out was a 1798 B-10, which was graded MS-62 by NGC. This is a very underrated and undervalued die marriage, especially in grades of EF and above (just try to find one...). I had seen this exact specimen for the first time at the Portland ANA in 1998. I went back to look at it again at the Portland show, but it had already been sold, probably to the intermediary, or intermediaries, who sold it to Mr. Hering. It realized \$15,525 "this time around." Lastly, a 1798 B-31, BB-115 Dollar (R-5) graded PCGS EF-45 realized \$3,795, almost 2X Trends price. This was an above average specimen for this die marriage.

Two relatively common 1798 die marriages also did well. A 1798 B-27 in PCGS EF-45 realized \$3,565 and a 1798 B-13, BB-108 in PCGS EF-45 realized a strong \$3,795. My guess is that the buyer believed that these were "candidates for upgrades (to AU-50)?"

There were no exceptionally rare die marriages for 1799 or 1800. However, three lots are worth mentioning, primarily for die states that were either relatively unknown or unreported. These lots are all from the January *FUN Sale*. The three lots are:

### **Rare Perfect Die State 1799 B-5, BB-157 Silver Dollar**

**1799 Large Eagle PCGS AU55, B-5, BB-157. R-2. Die State I.** Here is a significant coin for die variety specialists, and one that is in a high grade. This coin was struck from the extremely rare "perfect state" of the dies, a condition that was not known to exist in 1993 when the Bowers silver dollar book was published. This coin is well struck and displays light silver and gold toning on both the obverse and reverse. The famous "Boston Dollar" we offered as Lot 6497 in our 1997 *ANA Sale* is one of the finest known B-5, BB-1799 Silver Dollars. It was graded MS65 NGC.

**1799 Large Eagle, AU58 NGC, B-16, BB-158. R-2. Intermediate Die State II to III.** This is a lustrous specimen displaying light silver surfaces with shades of gold intermixed throughout.

This coin was struck from clashed dies. The clashing can be observed on both sides of the coin. The most obvious clashing on the obverse die can be viewed as "waves" above the date. Clash marks are also evident from the area around the first star, by Liberty and the last star. Under magnification, the clashing from the 9's in the date can be observed between STATES and OF. This is best viewed with the coin turned upside down.

### **Lustrous Almost Uncirculated 1800 B-10, BB-190 Silver Dollar**

**1800 Large Eagle, AU58 PCGS, B-10, BB-190. R-2. Intermediate Die State VI to VII.** This lustrous example of the so-called "Very Wide Date" variety is very close to Mint State and is struck from a very late die state of the B-10, BB-190 die marriage. It has light to medium silver and gold toning.

Although not mentioned in the die state analysis in the Bowers book, at some point the obverse die clashed with the reverse die. This specimen shows clash marks between Liberty and the rim, through the 13th star and into the field in front of Liberty. The reverse die is virtually shattered, and displays a myriad of die breaks through AMERICA, the wreath, and the eagle's right wing into the star area.

This shows how much more there is to learn relative to the early United States silver dollars 1794-1803, especially as it pertains to die states. *[JRCS members are encouraged to report new or unlisted die states via The John Reich Journal.]*

There were a number of 1800 "Dotted Date" varieties in these two sales. This is the 1800 B-14, BB-194 die marriage. An PCGS AU-50 specimen realized \$3,200. In contrast, a specimen graded NGC AU-58 realized a low five-figure price (\$11,500). \$55,200 was realized for an example grading NGC MS-65. An example graded NGC MS-66 appears not to have sold.

For 1803 there was one specimen that stood out. Lot 7245 in the FUN Sale was a nice example of the very rare 1803 B-3, BB-256 (Low R-6) die marriage. It was graded PCGS VF-35. Trends price for a VF-35 1803 dollar is roughly \$1,500, thus when this specimen was sold for \$4,715 it realized a premium of approximately 3X Trends.

All of the Heritage lots mentioned here, as well as the other over 200 early dollars, can still be viewed on the Heritage web site under "Auction Archives."



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# My Acorn

**Philip J. Evans**

You are quite likely familiar with the old saying that "Even a blind pig finds an acorn once in a while".

Since a recent substantial weight loss, I don't really consider myself to be a pig (except when it comes to Bust Halves), but my vision problems of the last few years nearly qualified my on the blind part, but with that old saying in mind, let me tell you about my acorn!

My wife and I moved to the Chapel Hill area in NC last June, and as the moving dust settled, I began to scout the area for coin shows, in hopes of adding to my Capped Bust Half variety collection. I noted that there was a show, not too far away, so we decided to attend.

I loaded my briefcase with "The Brick", three different opticals, and a couple of millimeter rulers, and away we went. The show was being held in a small convention center, nicely organized, and with about forty dealer tables, I would estimate. A great deal like dozens of such shows I had attended in the middle of the country.

My wife found a comfortable place to sit, and started reading. I started making the rounds of the tables, asking the usual "any Capped Bust Halves?". There were a few, and nobody voiced any objections when I asked if it was okay to attribute. Some were previously attributed and some were mis-attributed. I don't really know how others do it, but, since I am not missing any R1 through R4 varieties, I have marked my dog-eared Overton, page by page, to indicate what I am looking for- so, in most cases I often do not actually attribute the coin I'm looking at. I just make certain that it is not one I am seeking.

I had worked my way about three-fourths of the way around the room, when I arrived at a table where the dealer had a group of about a dozen Busties. A very agreeable, courteous, man. He said that most of his were attributed, but not all, and that I was welcome to attribute. I arranged the coins by year, and started in, with my briefcase on my knees, and Overton open on it. A bit more than half way through the stack, I came to an 1830. Very decent looking coin- no special problems- about VF35, I figured. It had no Overton number on it, and no asking price- just the date, and the dealer code on the reverse of the 2X2. I am looking for a couple of "upgraders" in 1830- so I started using 10 power on the obverse, to see if there were any "quickie" diagnostics. The little notch at the tip of the knob of the 3 jumped at me. Oh, Boy! I remember this one! I paged through to O114, and there was the "stars drawn notch at top knob 3"- and also there, on the opposite page was O113, an R2, which says "A die chip is evident on inside of upper knob of 3 on late die states", so I figured-- "okay, what we have here will be another O113". I didn't really have the nerve to jump right in to working the reverse for O114 - so I flipped the coin over and started comparing its reverse to the O113 description.

I had been here before- the common obverse matched with the rare reverse- or the other way around. We've all had our hopes raised in this situation, haven't we?

I took a couple of deep breaths, and went for my 10 power loupe- and studied the A's. No, A2 and A3 were not filled. We all know that 50C. at 1 1/4 mm. can be a bit deceptive- but it sure didn't measure a bit over 1 mm. to me! The I was not centered under the T. It looked to me that the right sides were in line. By this point I was starting to hyperventilate a tad. It really didn't look like reverse K. Back to the obverse, and zeroed in on the O114 page in Overton. Yes, the stars were drawn. Yes, the notch on the 3 was still there. The other obverse diagnostics tallied perfectly with obverse 7. Date a close 8 mm. 1 higher and spaced wider than 830. No doubt about it. Obverse 7. Now the reverse. 50C. 1 mm., Arrowheads close, and the attachments to the shafts above were visible. The letters were large. AA was 1/4 mm. The D and S of the legend were only 1 mm. apart- looked like one word! Right sides of T and I in line! I was ready to leap up and run around the table- and there was line 1 of stripe 4 extending well below the bottom of the shield- this WAS O114! An R5+!

I sat back and tried to appear calm and bored. Then I went back over every item in the Overton description of the reverse of O114, the A's, measuring the A for length and width, the D-E, the ME close, with base of E higher- everything. They all continued to check perfectly!

I didn't yell Eureka! I didn't jump up and down. I calmly handed the coin to the dealer and said, "No price on this one- what do you want for it?" He checked his code, and quoted me a very fair price for a VF Capped Bust Half. Would you believe I didn't haggle one bit? I paid his asking price, and said "Thank you sir", slipped the coin into my shirt pocket, packed up, and headed for where my wife sat reading. "Let's go", I said. "I'm finished for today." "Are you sure", she asked. "Oh, yes- I'm VERY sure", I replied.

When we got to our car, I suspect she thought I had stopped off in the bar, because I was probably a bit incoherent, as I tried to explain what I had found, and I think she was a bit amused to watch me go through the whole procedure again in bright sunlight, mumbling. "Yeah, there it is, that's it, yes, yes it is", as I re-attributed the coin again. Then I just sat and smiled, for a while. An R5+- ex R6. Probably not more than forty around! What a great day!

The point of this whole thing is that there is always hope, when you have an unattributed Bust Half in front of you! Don't give up, fellow variety collectors- if an old guy like me, with vision like mine, can come up with an acorn, so can you! Hang in there.



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# A Tribute to Russell J. Logan 1941–2002

John W. McCloskey

The sudden death of JRCS board member Russell J. Logan in March 2002 was a real tragedy, not only for his family and friends but also for hundreds of collectors of early Federal coinage. Russ spent his entire adult life studying early 19th century United States silver coinage and had used his knowledge and technical skills to develop new methods for describing and identifying these early mint products. As an engineer, he was particularly interested in the striking process and he studied the coinage dies as well as the collar dies that were used in the minting process. He co-authored books on Bust dimes and Bust half dimes that serve as the standard reference books for these series and greatly advanced the available knowledge to collectors in each series. Russ was instrumental in developing the emission sequence for the die varieties in these series through his understanding of die deterioration and he provided collectors with more detailed variety descriptions than were previously available. We are also indebted to Russ for the many articles that he published on early Federal coinage in **The John Reich Journal** and for the leadership he showed in promoting the study and collecting of early Bust coinage.

I started collecting Bust dimes in 1968 and became interested in die varieties a few years later. When I compared coins with the same date I quickly realized that there were often obvious differences in the size and placement of the date on each obverse die as well as differences in the size and placement of the lettering on each reverse die. I began to wonder just how many different dies were used to strike the coins of any given date. Since there were no reference books on the series, I would record what I considered to be important features on my coins for comparison with other pieces that I found at shows. I would examine a coin of a specific date, read through my notes for the coins of that date, and then buy any coin that did not match the features that I had recorded for that date. This was not a very efficient process so I wrote a letter to Walter Breen in 1975 asking him if he could provide me with the name of any individual who had done research on early Bust dimes. Walter sent me an address for David J. Davis who in turn introduced me to Russ at the Michigan State Convention in November 1976. This first meeting with Russ was very memorable for me because it clearly demonstrated that Russ was very well organized, a creative problem solver and more knowledgeable about Bust coinage than anyone that I knew. While I was reading hand written notes that I hoped would identify the coinage dies, Russ pulled out a hand made device constructed from two pieces of cardboard that rotated around an axis that was held together by a metal pin. One piece of cardboard had the words UNITED STATES OF AMERICA written on it and the other one had the words E PLURIBUS UNUM on it. Russ would rotate one piece of cardboard around with respect to the other until it matched the position of the scroll on the Capped Bust dime that he was studying. He particularly noted the position of the second S in STATES relative to the S in PLURIBUS on the coin of interest. Once the letters were properly lined up he had a notation identifying the reverse of the coin. He then pulled out his quick finding charts that listed the known obverse dies for this reverse. Within a few seconds he was able to identify the variety of the coin. Any new die combination was quickly noted and added to the list of die marriages for the date. It took me only a few minutes to recognize that I had just met an

individual who would be able to expand my knowledge of Bust dimes beyond anything that I had ever expected to achieve.

For the next several years David, Russ and I met at shows in the Midwest gathering information on Bust dimes and expanding our list of known varieties. At first we would be disappointed if we didn't identify a new variety at every show we attended. But after a while new discoveries became less frequent and we began to see the same varieties over and over again. We recognized that we were getting closer to our goal of identifying all of the varieties in the series. During our research I was content to identify the varieties in the series and describe them sufficiently so that I would be able to recognize another example when I encountered it. Russ however wanted more from our research and was determined to develop an emission sequence for the use of the coinage dies over the years. I remember that we frequently agonized over the striking sequence of several coins with the same reverse when it seemed that they were struck in identical die states. Sometimes the proper sequence would only be resolved months later when one of us was able to purchase a piece that clearly distinguished the striking sequence for two varieties. Russ was never satisfied until specimens were obtained that would clearly identify the emission sequence for each die. This research proved to be the foundation for the book **"Early United States Dimes 1796 – 1837"** that was published in 1984. Again Russ played an important role in publishing this reference book on Bust dimes. He established the outline for the text, he used his computer skills to create the charts and graphs for the manuscript, he assigned tasks to be completed by the five authors, he set deadlines for the completion of these assignments, he distributed copies of the revised text as additions and corrections were submitted by the authors and he coordinated the discussion of problems that arose while preparing the manuscript for publication. He was basically the driving force that coordinated the efforts of the research and saw to it that all of the components of the project were completed and properly structured into the working manuscript.

After publication of the Bust dime book Russ continued to collect early Bust coinage and became increasingly frustrated by the Valentine reference book on the half dime series. He felt that the Valentine descriptions frequently did not provide enough information to accurately identify the varieties and that too many collectors could not properly identify their coins from the small pictures and brief descriptions provided in the text. He was also aware that a number of new discoveries were not listed in the original text or subsequent reprints of the book. Russ and I discussed the shortcomings of the Valentine reference many times and in 1990 he asked me to join him in creating a new reference book for the series.

Russ believed strongly that it was important to establish the emission sequence for the varieties in the series so that we could better understand operations at the mint during the early part of the 19th century. He set out studying the deterioration of the obverse and reverse dies but along the way he became intrigued by the collars that were used at the mint to strike these coins. He counted the reeds on the edge of the coins, he measured the diameter of the coins and he looked for collar characteristics that would indicate a deterioration of the collar die. As the emission sequence emerged he discovered that the edge reeds often differed from collar to collar, that the collar expanded slightly as it progressed through its life span and that there were minor edge flaws that could be used to distinguish one collar from another. These were all new areas of numismatic research that had not been previously used in the attribution of early Bust half dimes.

There were times when the emission sequence gave us serious problems in that there seemed to be no reasonable way to order the coins in a striking sequence that accounted for the defects that we observed on the coins. I remember taking all of the coins that we had with the same reverse, lining them up face down and then ordering them according to the deterioration of the reverse die. For a few of the reverses in the series we may have had more than thirty coins lined up at one time. We would turn them over one at a time noting the variety of each piece in the series. Coins of the same variety usually appeared together but on some occasions there were coins of the same variety that were separated by pieces from one or more other varieties. This process led to the identification of the remarriages in the series. For the remarriage, coins of a single variety are separated in the emission sequence by coins of another variety when one of the two dies from that marriage was used in an intermediate state. I can remember several sessions when we identified more than one new remarriage during a single evening of numismatic research.

I know that Russ was very pleased by the identification of so many remarriages in the series and he felt that they should be properly recognized in the manuscript. I was willing to list the remarriages for a given variety but I was not interested in giving them a separate identification number in the text. Russ felt strongly that coins separated in the emission sequence should be recognized as individual production runs at the mint. This issue was resolved by creating the decimal identification system for remarriages. The same basic code was used for all coins of the same variety but an extension was added to the code indicating a remarriage for that variety. This coding procedure allows the collector to ignore remarriages if he is not interested in collecting the series in this detail.

I became concerned that many collectors would have trouble identifying the remarriages because only a few die cracks or die defects separated many of them in the emission sequence. This problem was resolved by the creation of flow charts for the deterioration of the reverse dies in the series. When a reverse die was used for a remarriage a flow chart showed the order in which the varieties were struck and a notation made indicating the particular deterioration that took place during each marriage. This allowed the reader to run down the chart until he came to a feature that was not present on his coin. He would then know where his piece fit into the striking sequence for that reverse. The creation of these flow charts demonstrates that Russ seemed to be able to find a solution for every problem that we encountered during our research on early Bust half dimes. This work led to the publication of our book "**Federal Half Dimes 1792 – 1837**" that was published in 1998.

Russell James Logan is a man whose knowledge as a numismatic scholar and whose experience with early 19th century Federal coinage cannot be replaced. I am constantly reminded of this while working on my new manuscript for Classic gold coins that were struck from 1834 to 1839. Russ never collected gold coinage but I know that he would have had many useful suggestions on how I should handle some of the problems that I have experienced during my attempts to create an emission sequence for these coins. It is still difficult for me to process the thought that I will no longer have the opportunity to sit down with him and discuss the early days at the United States Mint.



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# A Double Struck 1803 JR-2 Dime

**John W. McCloskey**

About ten years ago I purchased a nice 1803 JR-2 dime that had some very unusual features for a coin that was struck during the early part of the 19th century. The coin had been double struck and the remains of the earlier image could be seen running off the edge of the coin. The remains of the off center strike were very clear at the rim but very little detail from the earlier strike was visible near the center of the coin. The piece would grade a nice original XF but it has several weak areas due to the way that it was struck. The coin also has some reverse damage but this does not detract from the fact that it is a very intriguing coin from the early years at the mint.

After many years of studying this coin I was still not able to explain the unusual features that I saw on its surfaces. I simply did not understand how this coin could have been struck at the mint to produce the extra marks that I saw. I finally received an explanation for how this coin was struck when Chris Pilliod showed me an 1838 Seated half dime with an earlier image on its rim. Chris claimed that his coin was initially struck off center and that it was later placed back into the collar and struck again to produce the full strong second image over the weakened earlier off center strike. His coin exhibited clear markings of an earlier off center strike on the rims with very little evidence of the previous strike on the surface of the coin. Chris claims that it was common practice at the mint during the early part of the 19th century to salvage off center coins by simply striking them again within the collar. This explanation clearly explained what I saw on my double struck 1803 dime that had puzzled me for so many years. I now felt comfortable that I had a genuine mint product and a solid explanation for how it was produced.

The coin is easily recognized as a late die state example of the 1803 JR-2 dime. The obverse has a 3 in the date that tilts to the left and the reverse has the die crack that runs from cloud 6, through the field to the N in UNUM and continuing down the left side of the shield to the claw and arrows before it reaches the rim. This crack appears on all examples of the 1803 JR-2 dime but the presence and strength of the crack above it identified this coin as a very late die state example of this variety. This final crack runs from the D in UNITED to the E P in E PLURIBUS, through the bottom of S7 and S8, through the top of S9 and S4, through cloud 4 and up through the right side of the second S in STATES to the rim. This crack is very strong and is likely responsible for the weakness on the reverse through the STA in STATES.

The remains of the earlier off center strike are clearly visible around the edges of the coin. Miss Liberty's lips can be seen near the rim over the T in LIBERTY with her chin extending down over the right edge of the T. The top of her head is visible at the rim over the I in LIBERTY with her hair continuing down along the left side of the I and extending into the field below the 7th star. The Y in LIBERTY is very weak because it was struck into the depressed field below Miss Liberty's chin on the off center image. The L is completely missing because it was also struck into the depressed field on the off center strike. The bust line from the off center strike can be seen running through the 8th star and extending off the edge of the coin before returning and running back through the 10th star. A string of shallow dentils from the off center strike begin in the field to the right of the 4th star and run in an arc through the curls

and bust to the 11th star before they run off the rim to the right of the 10th star. A very shallow image of the 03 from the earlier date can be seen in the field to the right of Miss Liberty's neck with the bottom of the 3 just touching the inside point of the 11th star. The obverse image is very weak on the lower left with the 1st star completely missing and the 1 in the date very weak. This weakness was likely caused by the strong crack in the reverse die that resulted in less pressure being applied to this part of the planchet during the final strike.

The reverse of this coin also shows the remains of the off center strike. The horizontal shield lines from the earlier strike can be seen running through the eagle's tail while the vertical shield lines extend off the edge of the coin at the bottom. The bundle of arrows from the off center strike can be seen extending up from the edge of the coin into the U in UNITED. The OF from the off center strike can be seen running through the ER in AMERICA with the image of an earlier cloud running through the I. Other stray marks from the off center strike can be seen in the lettering around the lower half of the reverse.

I cannot account for the damage to the reverse that runs at a diagonal through the center of the coin. I do believe however that it occurred many years ago shortly after the coin was struck at the mint. Despite this damage I believe that this is a fascinating coin that is a wonderful example of how off center coins were salvaged at the mint almost 200 years ago.

I would like to thank Rory Rea for the beautiful pictures of my 1803 JR-2 dime that have appeared with this article. His excellent photographs have made it possible to show the remaining features of the off center strike on this interesting and unusual coin.



# **Capped Bust Half-Dollar Secrets: The Denomination**

**Edgar E. Souders, NLG**

A study of the reverse denomination (50 C.) on the halves of 1807 – 1836 leads us to some fascinating facts, interesting theories - and as you are about to discover - a story of sorts, about the men who worked daily creating Capped Bust Half-dollars for a living. But first a little background history concerning the overall denomination on half-dollar coinage.

When Robert Scot designed the half-dollars of 1794 & 1795 (Flowing Hair) the denomination only appeared on the edge of the half. This was in the form of the familiar FIFTY CENTS OR HALF A DOLLAR edge with decorations between words.

In 1796-97 (Draped Bust – Small Eagle), an attempt was made to make it easier for individuals in our country to quickly decipher the half-dollars stated value. Scot added the fraction  $\frac{1}{2}$  to the reverse directly below the Eagle. The edge inscription with decorations continued - making this half-dollar a double denomination issue.

Four years later with the redesign of the reverse in 1801-1807 (Draped Bust – Heraldic Eagle) Scot once again eliminated the reverse denomination leaving only the FIFTY CENTS OR HALF A DOLLAR edge inscription. This worked well, for its intended purpose, which was to keep unscrupulous individuals from the unlawfully "shaving" silver from the edge. Nevertheless, it did little for the general populations ability to quickly decipher the stated value of the coin.

When John Reich "took over" the job as (co) engraver in 1807 he radically changed both obverse and reverse designs on the half-dollar. The new Capped Bust - Lettered Edge Half showed the denomination, not only on the edge, similar to the preceding halves, but also in the form of a newly designed 50 C. below the Eagle on the reverse. Once again, the double denomination issue half-dollar was produced.

Over the period of 1807 – 1836 more minor experimentation took place with the edge denomination design. In 1814, for example, a small star was added, as a separational device, between DOLLAR and FIFTY. Then in 1830, diagonal lines were added between words, with varying degrees of success, through the end of the series. With that said, and the edge denomination facts out of the way, I now wish to discuss "the other denomination" on the Capped Bust Half-dollars.

## **THE REVERSE DENOMINATION**

As mentioned above several changes took place with the edge denomination, but what about reverse denomination changes? Many collectors believe that the redesign of 1807 was the

only change to occur until the 1836 Reeded Edge half-dollar design by Christian Gobrecht. This line of thought would be a mistake. Upon closer examination we find that changes did indeed occur to the reverse denomination. And this is an understatement. Then too, even though these changes at first glance appear to be minute, further study shows that there was a distinct purpose behind these changes.

Digging further into this study I found that, like most so-called simplistic things concerning Capped Bust halves, this study was not going to be so simple. As it turned out my notes show that I individually viewed, examined and recorded 237 different marriages from 1807 – 1836 paying particular attention to those dies produced by each engraver (Reich, Scot and Kneass) when each "took over the reins" in 1807, 1817 and 1824. Fortunately, I also had my recently "workable" extensive microphotograph collection of halves within my computer to consult. This "set", which I created over the last 30+ years, was recently scanned into my computer and consists of some 1400 close-up half-dollar photographs. By using this computerized system, in conjunction with a 21-inch Trinitron monitor for ease of display, I was able to view in great detail those marriages to which I did not have immediate physical access for study.

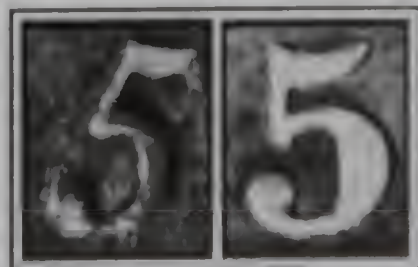
In viewing the coins, under the microscope, a close examination of the halves reveals that on occasion, different traceable size "C" and "O" punches were used throughout the series. Still, there were no great variations among these two punches aside from smaller and larger sizes and minor placement changes. However, with one of the numerals there was a great deal of variation. By far, the most "fooled with" figure of the reverse denomination, was the 5 numeral. And it is here where the story begins.

### A HISTORY OF THE 5'S AND THE MEN BEHIND THEM

There are numerous examples of "Slanted 5's," "Curved-Top 5's," "Straight-Top 5's," "Horn-Top 5's," and other more minor variations due to hand engraving (such as a short curved-top as opposed to a long curved-top). And the question for all of this is: Why?

The first type of "5" numeral utilized on the Capped Bust halves (1807) was the slanted 5 style. Evidently, John Reich merely continued using the same style numeral 5, from the very same punch set, as was used earlier by Robert Scot in the date area, on the Draped Bust – Heraldic Eagle halves.

This slanted 5 punch was used on every half-dollar reverse die created by Reich during his ten-year tenure. In fact, this style was not changed until 1819 (after Reich's resignation) when a set of figure punches was purchased from Richard Starr of Starr Brothers punch manufacturing fame. Records show that this purchase took place on February 24, of 1819. (Figure #1 shows both the early slanted 5 used by John Reich and the new 5 punch on right).



But what you may find interesting, as I did, was that Reich never recut a 5 numeral in the denomination area. Not one! He did, in 1807, repunch a single reverse die with a 5 over and earlier punched 2 used to create O-111 and O-112, but this effort was a "correction punching" not the typical "strengthening" recutting or repunching. Further he never recut/repunched the 0 or C in the denomination either. This is an amazing fact inasmuch as how many 5's were recut or repunched during the span of the series. The only thing out of the ordinary, during Reich's time, was that occasionally some pieces from his dies do show a pronounced weakness to the top of the C in the reverse denomination, but more about that in a moment.

In 1819 Scot, having retaken control following Reich's resignation, switched over to the newly purchased numeral 5 punch for the creation of all new reverse working dies. This is proved in as much as only three varieties of 1819 show the older slanted numeral 5 style in the denomination (O-101, O-102 and O-103). All of these older styles were on overdated 1818 dies struck early in the year. Presumably the three reverses, paired with the overdated obverses, were left over from Reich's work prior to leaving the Mint in 1817.

Remember too, at this time in Scot's aged life, he was using everything and anything he could acquire. This was done so that he would not have to "go to the trouble" of engraving dies, or (and we will give him the benefit of the doubt), until he could somehow find time to engrave dies. For example, he used leftover 1813, 1814 and who knows what else to create the overdated 1817/13 (O-101), 1817/14 (O-102) and 1817 Punctuated Date (O-103). Further, he used a botched reverse die (AMERJCA) for the 1817 O-102 and O-103.

The majority of Scot's 1819 varieties show the newer, more upright Curved-Top numeral 5. Despite his accepted usage of the new punch, in my opinion, Scot's still tried to "slant" the 5 by tilting the punch to the left (appears right on the struck halves). This was apparently either his preference, or an old habit that he could not easily break (examine any 1819 half-dollar to see exactly what I mean). Further if you take a look at the 1819, O-107/O-108 reverse you will note that Scot repunched (not recut) the 5 in an attempt to slant it even more towards the 0 numeral.

By 1823 we can see, that as the working die reverses were created through the year, many of the resultant struck halves show a tendency for the 5 numeral to display a more upright position. In 1823, when Scot died, William Kneass took over (1824) and placed the 5 numeral (same punch) in the upright position on the working dies.

Some five years later, a new shorter Curved-Top on the 5 appeared in 1829. It was during this time that much of Kneass' experimentation was taking place. More to the point, concerning the denomination, certain varieties of halves from 1829 show small upturned tips on the 5's (see O-110 or O-111) while others show the 5 with a short stubby V-shaped top (1829, O-117). Additionally, one year later, in 1830 the tops on many 5's appear longer with straight tops (O-105, O-113, etc.). Again, all of these variations are the result of hand engraving.

But Kneass was not exercising a newly found artistic liberty - he actually had a reason for doing all of this. It is further apparent, from viewing the halves from this time, that engraver Kneass was dissatisfied with the strike in the denomination area. Actually, not only denomination, but dissatisfied with the strike of the entire design. He was determined to "overhaul" nearly every device in an attempt to improve the overall strike of the half-dollar.

But for now, specifically concerning the 5 numeral, in 1834 he incorporated the recently obtained smaller numeral 5 punch on all reverse working dies (except three reverse dies which were "leftovers" and had used the earlier, larger 5 numeral punch). This new downsized 5 punch showed up on the halves with a straighter top. However, whether or not the top section of the 5 existed on the actual punch during this time is debatable. Perhaps it was a partial punch. Or perhaps it was simply a broken punch. In either event, most likely, only the lower curl and upright were punched. The top, or flag, appears to have been engraved on each and every die.

What was Kneass up to here? What was he attempting to do? To answer this question we must go back to the halves themselves and let them tell us more.

### **DENOMINATION WEAKNESS**

Weakness in the denomination area was due to two very different reasons. The first reason was that lapping of the die in this area could cause an overall weakness, such as the rare 1836, O-116a (50/00). For example, this reverse die was lapped down due to heavy rusting of the die. While this did eliminate surface rust, some of the rust pits, and the traces of the 0 beneath the 5, it also weakened the 5 to a minor degree, the 0 to a major degree and the C to a lesser degree. Further it weakened the feather detail directly above the denomination. Some arrowshaft feathers appear to float on the field. Still, this type of reverse denomination weakness appears infrequently and is mentioned only for accuracy. The second, and typical cause of weakness in the denomination area, 99.9 percent of the time, was a lack of metal flowage.

### **REICH'S DESIGN WEAKNESS**

It may come as a surprise to some that John Reich never really had much of a problem with weak strikes to the denomination area on halves struck from his dies. Occasionally the top of the C would strike up soft but that was about it. Unfortunately, the rest of his half-dollar design was plagued with weakness due to the higher relief of devices and bolder style of engraving. So basically, Reich was merely fortunate.

Originally (1807-08), his relatively consistent strike to the denomination area was due in part to the original design with a slightly smaller Eagle. Therefore there was more metal available to flow into the recesses of 50 C. But that was not the only reason. The other, and more important factor, was due to the shape of the 5 numeral itself. It was slanted at a steep angle, covering the field area in a minutely different location, and much narrower when compared to its length. This helped the 5 numeral to strike up better.

Actually, we are quite fortunate that the reverse denomination struck up as well as it did on Reich's halves, because overall I do not believe that John Reich had a good working knowledge of metal flowage. If he would have he would not have done some of the things he did when he cut new master reverse and obverse dies in 1809, such as enlarging the Eagle's neck at the top of the shield and widening the shield. He also widened the Eagle's left leg, thickened the end of the olive branch and enlarged the Eagle's talons, claws and arrowheads. All of this required even more metal to move up into the incuse devices of the reverse die. Then, to add further problems to the denomination area, he redesigned the obverse, shortening the Liberty Cap itself – cutting the Cap deeper into the master. Additionally, everything on the obverse went to a higher relief (Liberty's cheek, bust, hair curls, etc). The end result was obverse and reverse dies that fought one another for the limited amount of metal available in the planchet. The terrible strikes of 1809 bare this fact out.

### SCOT'S "WEAKNESS"

On the other hand, Robert Scot only had minor problems with metal flowage on his dies when it came to the 50 C on the reverse. Starting in 1818 we begin to see some general recutting on both obverse and reverse to the stars and legend letters. But Scot, too, was lucky when it came to metal flowage in the denomination area. Due to his style of "shallow" overall engraving this, in itself, helped the strike because there was less detail to fill in the die cavities. Scot's halves notably wore down faster in circulation because of this, but when those halves first came out of the screwpress, the overall "look" was greatly improved. For this, again, we are fortunate. Scot, at this time in his life, would only do engraving when absolutely necessary. I believe Scot, like Reich, did not have a total grasp of the metal flowage problem. Why? Because he tried to constantly "strengthen" small devices on the halves, by recutting these areas on the dies, in the hope of getting a better strike. Considering his earlier Draped Bust half-dollar design, known for its terrible strike due to improper metal flowage within the devices, it appears he had not learned from his mistakes.

Aside from Scot's single reverse die "experiment" on the 1819 O-107 & O-108, (where he repunched 5 to slant it more), the only other reverse showing tinkering with the denomination was O-109 where he recut the top of the C.

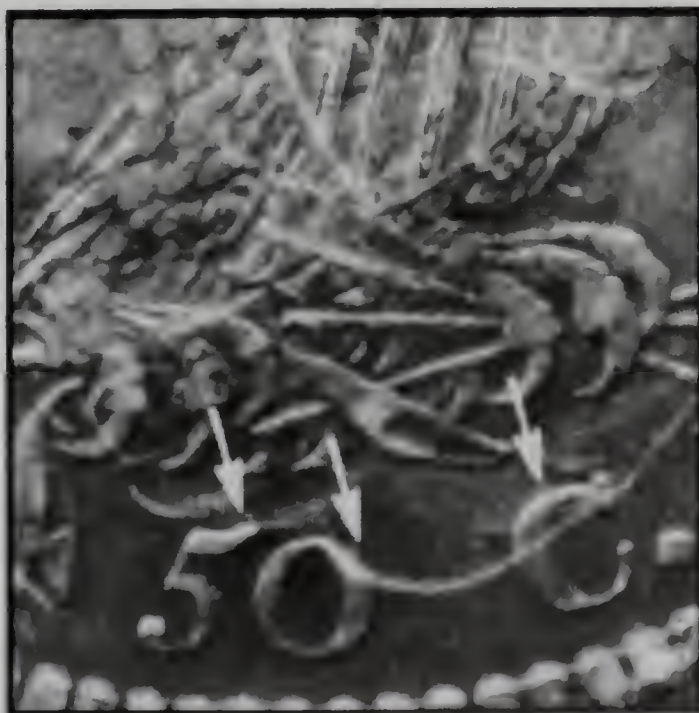
The problem with weakness to the top of the C in 50 C., shows up on Scot's halves thru the early 1820's (see Fig. #2 on next page). If Scot looked at the halves coming out of the press - and I am quite sure he did - he could easily see that often the top of the C in the denomination did not strike up well. But instead of lowering the obverse height of the fold of the Liberty Cap opposite the denomination, he just recut the C hoping for the best.

Scot may, or may not have known what was actually causing the denomination weakness problem, but it is apparent he could see that a shallow, more flat design gave better results than Reich's higher, thicker style of engraving. This is the likely reason why, after Reich left the Mint in 1817, Scot went back to a much more shallow flat-like obverse design.



**Fig. #2**

Using my computer I created the see through half you see in Fig. #3 below. This photo dramatically illustrates the true cause of the weak reverse denomination on Capped Bust Halves. You will note that the arrows, pointing to the white line (of the upside down) Liberty Cap, show exactly what was going on when the height of the Liberty Cap pulled metal away from the reverse denomination area. The 5 numeral's tip was affected (more so on the upright style 5), the top of the 0 was touched and the top of the C was clipped. This "line" minutely varied from sub-design type to sub-design type but was basically the metal flowage rule. The only exception to this rule would be if the dies became loose in the screwpress and rotated from their normal position. Then metal flowage weakness could occur in some very strange areas.



**Fig. #3**

Still, none of Scot's denomination weakness problem compares to the recutting and repunching that took place on the denomination when William Kneass took over as Chief Engraver. When Scot died in 1823, Kneass over the next ten years created ever-higher relief obverse hubs and subsequent working dies which, once again, caused the denomination area to "fade out".

### KNEASS - THE PERFECTIONIST?

As stated Kneass' 1825 obverse hub was higher than Scot's shallow design of 1817. Additionally, he created a much more distinct and HIGHER hair detail. In fact, engraver Kneass, dissatisfied with the half-dollar strike, seems to have "hit the ground running" when it came to experimenting with the Capped Bust half overall.

For example, before even working with the reverse 50 C. area, in 1826 he reworked the obverse hub, most noticeably in the chin area of Miss Liberty. He carefully thickened the actual chin on the profile and recut the area from the lower chin to the neck junction. This eliminated the jowl or "double chin" effect thereby creating a more squared and slender jaw-line. Also, the result of this was that the left wing of the Eagle immediately struck up better due to more metal being available from the obverse chin.

At this point, based on the observation of his successes, it would seem that Kneass had knowledge of metal flowage of opposing high areas. As he continued to experiment, both the old and "new" hubs were used to randomly make the working dies which explains why Capped Bust Halves from 1826, 1827, etc., show minor differences to the portrait from one obverse to the next. Remember that throughout this ten-year span (1825-35) Kneass continued tweaking the design in his attempt to better standardize the strikes. So, he was on to the problem. The reverse denomination would come next. It was just a matter of how to deal with it.

While viewing the halves of 1825 I noticed something that I had not paid too much attention to prior to this study. It appears that Kneass did an experiment with a particular reverse in 1825 (O-111). Here he attempted to get a better strike in the denomination area by repunching the entire denomination lower on the working die reverse. I now believe that this was his first experiment to see if the denomination would strike up better if placed lower towards the dentils.



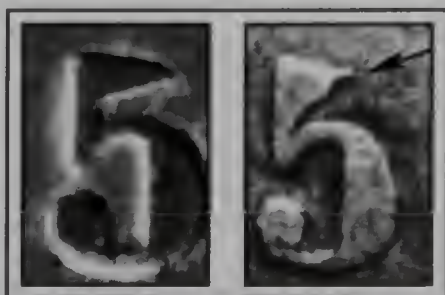
By 1826 he, like Scot, erroneously attempted to strengthen the denomination area by recutting/repunching the 5 and C of the denomination (1826 O-103 and O-120). It did not work for him either. In fact it had the opposite effect. With more of a cavity in the working die the strikes in the denomination area became even worse.

He continued experimenting in 1827 by recutting the 5 numeral on O-103, O-105, O-116, O-117 and O-119. Additionally he recut the C of the denomination on O-101, O-132 and O-145. Obviously the weak 50 C. area was beginning to have an effect on Kneass who continued to fool with the denomination by recutting the C in 1828 on O-111, O-112 and O-117.

By 1829 his recutting to the denomination had become an obsession. The flag on the 5, in particular, was recut to the extreme. On O-102 and O-103 he produced a bizarre flag on the 5 where it basically starts out normal but then is reduced to nothing much more than a spike. He recut the flag on O-108 and cut the flag differently on O-117 and O-118 as a short stubby triangle. He also recut the C on O-104 with some of these, in early die state, showing a recutting to the upper left corner of the 5.

Still not satisfied with the strike to 50 C., the following year in 1830, he recut the 5 on O-103 and O-117 (even recutting the C on O-106), and for the first time, the O of the denomination on O-105. Interestingly, in 1831, only one marriage shows a recut 5 (O-103) and then again in 1832 another single marriage (O-103) shows a recut 5. Was Kneass finally satisfied? As it turns out...he was only getting warmed up!

In 1833 he created over a dozen different types of 5 numerals! O-101 and O-111 show a relatively normal flag that has been recut along the bottom. O-102 and O-115 show ill formed triangle flags with a spike – these are similar (not the same) and these two marriages resemble 1829 O-103's flag. O-104 is mildly recut at its lower curve while O-105 shows a double point to the flag. O-106 shows a "rocket nosecone" flag while O-108's flag stops short with a blunt end. O-109 and O-113 show flags that are not much more than small triangles. Well, at least he left the C alone!



1834's that show his graver work to the 5 numeral are O-101 and O-121. Both show recutting. Also all O-121's show recutting to the inside of the 0. On O-115 Kneass repunched the 0 to move it closer to the 5 numeral thereby giving a bit more space between the 0 and C (this recutting does not show up on this marriage after the die was lapped).

The 1835 halves greet us with another group of 5 numerals that you really should personally

view to appreciate. O-101 and O-102 show a 5 whose flag and upright was recut or repositioned. This was followed with a 5 on O-103 showing recutting at the flag tip. O-108's flag is not curved at all but eye-pleasingly straight across the top. Finally O-104 and O-107 show 5's (different reverses) with what has become known as the "horn top" 5's – that is to say a flag where it appears relatively normal except that the point flips up like a bull's horn near the end. Very interesting indeed.

Somewhere along about this time, in 1835, Engraver Kneass suffered a stroke. While researching this denomination study I have come to wonder if his stroke was caused, in part, by his obsession with recutting and experimenting on the half-dollar. Whatever the true reason, weather age, stress, or a combination of both, you have to give this man credit for his persistence. His meticulous work was beginning to pay off - and not just to the denomination area.

In general, since 1823, due to Kneass' constant experimentation the strikes were becoming much better on just about every area of the obverse and reverse design. He experimented with EVERYTHING! Every hub creation and nearly every working die from 1823 on shows that he incorporated smaller devices, lettering, smaller numerals and smaller stars. He made changes to the Liberty device both in shape and size, right on through the 1834 Abominable Bastards, to the final master die/hub used for the remainder of the series. Miss Liberty once again became bolder, higher and was struck up better overall from coin to coin. Due to Kneass the design qualities of our Capped Bust halves were tightened up to the point where some of the coins almost look like they came from a steam press. And what about the strike quality in the 50 C area, did it too improve?

The Capped Bust halves from the later years of 1835-36 show some of the best strikes in the reverse denomination, when compared to the height of the obverse design, of all the halves in the series.

Following Kneass' stroke the final Lettered Edge halves of 1836 show only minor recutting to the 5's flag on O-104, O-114, and O-118. Also the 5 numeral was punched over 0 which was first punched in error on the reverse of O-116. With the continued problem of metal flowage weakness, for a span of some 25 years, it is not surprising that the 50 C. style would soon be eliminated.

It soon ended in favor of the abbreviation "50 CENTS", on the reeded edge halves by Christian Gobrecht. This abbreviated denomination style began in 1836-37 and was struck at the Second Mint by a steam powered press. In 1838 the denomination was again changed by Gobrecht to "HALF DOL." and this final denomination style was used for more than fifty-years until the introduction of the Barber half-dollar in 1892.

But I do not believe Chief Engraver Kneass was ever satisfied with the denomination once he started working to improve it. Yet, I have to wonder; did Kneass' stroke end his obsession with the denomination? Did he simply give up on the problem or run out of time in his attempt to make the denomination area better on the half-dollar? Was it Christian Gobrecht, a brand new

second Mint, and the introduction of the steam press that were the major deciding factors that eliminated the denomination weakness? And I guess more importantly to the story, did Kneass fail?

I do not think so. In reviewing all of the evidence left with us today on his halves, created from dies by his steady hand, I do not think it was William Kneass' nature to fail. Not after he took the Capped Bust half-dollar design so far. Not even after a devastating stroke that would have put a lesser persistent man completely out of commission. Why? Because I believe William Kneass glimpsed the future. He was probably the strongest and most experienced cause for the change that was about to come.

Back in 1834 Kneass created the beautiful 1838 pattern half-dollar obverse die (Judd 72-75), which was mated with three different reverse pattern dies designed by Christian Gobrecht. All three of these experimental reverses spelled out the abbreviated denomination "HALF DOL." So, even though this pattern obverse - believed by researchers to be Kneass' last actual engraving effort - was not utilized in the making of regular Capped Bust half-dollar coinage, he most likely knew about "the plan" for the denomination. My bet is that he not only knew about it, but was probably directly responsible for it. After all, most likely he and Christian Gobrecht had discussed the idea for the forthcoming denomination changes for quite some time - prior to 1835!

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# Early US Dollars and John Haugh

**Lano Balulescu**

As many of you are aware, the early US coin collecting community lost an esteemed scholar and true gentleman, John Haugh. Coin collecting is a marvelous hobby that can be filled with many rewarding experiences. Ranking high (most of the time!) among those experiences are the fascinating people from all walks of life that you can meet.

John Haugh was one of those people.

I met John at a Long Beach Show in the early 90's. I was just starting my passionate interest and study in early US dollars and noticed this gentleman at the show with a coin case of Indian Head cents and early US Dollars. What an eclectic inventory! John LOVED conversation so we became fast friends as we talked incessantly about early dollars (ED's). We were both fascinated with the beauty, history and quite frankly, the underrated status (at the time) of these early US jewels. When it came to early dollars at a major coin show, we were on a "treasure" hunt. Long before rare Bolender varieties became the rage, John and I would individually scour the bourse floor to see who could pick up the rarest variety. I must confess that John had the upper hand here, picking up some incredible Bolender rarities, including a 1798 Heraldic Eagle B-32 (R7). I found plenty (in a manner of speaking) of R6's but could not top John's "score" of an R7. Coin collecting was indeed a lot of fun, especially with John.

John was also a gifted writer and began to write frequently (including this Journal) about early dollars. He was a contributor to Jules Reiver's recent seminal book on Early US Dollars and very recently wrote an article for the Coin Dealer Newsletter's Quarterly II (October 2001) on (of course) early US Dollars. John's interest in writing and conversation was no accident. In his former life, he was a very successful private attorney and early Civil Rights activist, going all the way back to the days when he interned in President Kennedy's White House (you should have heard THOSE stories!).

John always felt that early US Dollars were vastly underrated (especially the rare Bolender varieties) and an absolute bargain compared to their rarities. He worked assiduously to convince people of that. At first, many dealers and collectors dismissed his collecting predilections and his "far out" predictions about the future prices of early US dollars. As we all know today, the situation with early US dollars has changed dramatically. They are on everybody's want list and the darling of the bourse floor and auction circuit. There is no doubt that John made a significant contribution to the status of early US Dollars in today's coin market. Fortunately, he was around long enough to have seen a part of that surging interest.

Finally, John was also a close personal friend. We enjoyed each other's company as well as tales of our personal ups and downs. He was always quick with advice, and some of his advice was "bull's eye". I have often pondered how one's life would be any different had you met (or not met) a certain person. Having met John Haugh, the answer to that question is obvious.



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